

Lesson on European identity

This lesson aims at exploring the question whether there is something like a European identity. At the beginning of the lesson, students will probably feel a distance between the two countries and that there is probably little knowledge about one another. In the course of the lesson, the students will hopefully learn that there are things the Europeans have in common. The students are supposed to work in (ideally Finnish-German) pairs.

Lesson plan

- Students get themselves together in Finnish-German pairs
- Pages 2 and 3 can be done with the students in the whole class. As for the historical maps, the teacher probably has to provide some explanations (15 minutes)
- The teacher can add some information about the few connections between Finnish and German history (see page 4)
- After that the teacher writes down on board: "Is there a European identity"?
- The teacher makes sure that the students know what identity is: (5 minutes)
- The teacher hands out page 5. The students discuss these questions with each other in pairs. They don't have to write down anything. (15 minutes)
- After discussing the teacher can point out that, if both students of each pair agree on most (or actually all) the questions, it can be stated that there are indeed a lot of values that Europeans share.
- The teacher can also read out article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty and the Copenhagen Criteria dealing with the admittance of new member states (see page 6) (5 minutes)

What are the neighbouring countries of Finland and Germany?



Match the maps of Germany with the appropriate date.

a) 1871-1920

b) 1920-1937

c) 1949-1990

1

2



3



3



Match these maps related to Finnish history to the appropriate date

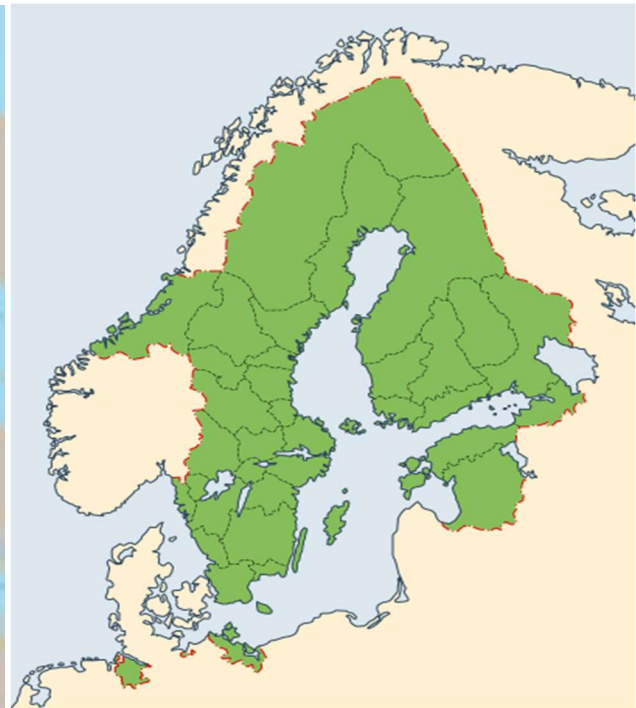
a) 1658

b) 1900

c) 1918

1

2



3



Finland-German-Relations

Relations between both nations began after the German Empire recognised the newly independent Finnish state on January 4, 1918. In the ensuing Finnish Civil War, Germany played a prominent role siding with the White Army and training Finnish Jägers. In one of the decisive battles of the war, German troops took Helsinki in April 1918.

During World War II, the secret protocol in Molotov–Ribbentrop pact enabled the Winter War (1939–40), a Soviet attack on Finland. Finland and Nazi Germany were "co-belligerents" against Soviet Union during the Continuation War (1941–44), but a separate peace with Soviet Union led to the Finnish-German Lapland War (1944–45).

Finland recognised both the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic (West and East Germany) in 1972 and it established diplomatic relations with East Germany in July 1972 and with West Germany in January 1973. (Wikipedia)

Questions on European identity?

1. Do you think that democracy is a good political system? Give reasons for your answer.

2. Do you think that freedom of speech is important? Give reasons for your answer.

3. Do you think that freedom of the press is important? Give reasons for your answer.

4. Do you think that men and women should be treated equally? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Do you think that heterosexual and homosexual people should be treated equally? Give reasons for your answer.

6. Do you think that minorities like the Swedish minority in Finland and the Danish minority in Germany should be allowed to teach and learn their native language in school? Give reasons for your answer.

7. Do you think that people should be allowed to practise whatever religion they believe in? Give reasons for your answer.

8. Do you think that it should be everyone's own individual decision what kind of life or lifestyle he or she wants to live or practise? Give reasons for your answer.

- The **Treaty of Lisbon** (initially known as the **Reform Treaty**) is an international agreement that amends the two treaties which form the constitutional basis of the European Union (EU). The Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed by all EU member states on 13 December 2007, entered into force on 1 December 2009.
- Lisbon Treaty Article 2 The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.
- The **Copenhagen criteria** are the rules that define whether a country is eligible to join the European Union. The criteria require that a state has the institutions to preserve democratic governance and human rights, has a functioning market economy, and accepts the obligations and intent of the European Union.